

Minutes
PARTNERSHIP FOR ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE (PATH)
August 29, 2023

11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Carilion Giles Community Hospital
Conference Room

Present:

Pam Ray, co-convenor	Aaron Boush	Justine Clifton
Vicky Collins, co-convenor	Margo Walter	Laura Groseclose
Rebecca Lord	Amanda Morgan	Trina Porterfield-Pifer
Holly Lesko	Ashley Hash	Theresa McCann
Katelyn Melton	Sophie Wenzel	Noelle Bissell
Tina King	Shelly Farmer	Harvey Barker
Ginny Ayers	Laura Beth Weaver	Kristie Williams
Lauren Blakemore	Michelle Brauns	

Holly Lesko, Director, Community Health, New River Valley Regional Commission

Holly explained that the opioid abatement funding that the New River Health District applied for was approved. They will be receiving more than \$3 million over a 5-year period. Plans are being developed on how to use the money including: adult and adolescent treatment, prevention, studies, education, and supportive housing. She mentioned a survey and asked for assistance in sharing it amongst the community for completion; it will be used to address stigma, need, and education about substance use and addiction. See the attached one-pager for more details about the opioid abatement funding.

Noelle Bissell, Director, New River Health District

Dr. Bissell spoke about the absence of harm reduction in our area and how the New River Health District will use its Mobile Unit for needle exchange services to provide access across the district. She also mentioned the New River Regional Jail has a new Superintendent and the possibility of starting MAT services within the jail. She wants the community to know what the Health Department offers instead of being pigeonholed in any one service. She listed birth control, vaccinations, STI testing, PREP/nPEP, and HEP C treatment as some of the many services provided. She encouraged everyone to complete naloxone training (Revive training) and that fentanyl, benzodiazepine, and xylazine test strips will be available.

Ginny Ayers, Executive Director, Literacy NRV

Ginny shared that the Literacy Volunteers of the NRV is now Literacy NRV. They currently have 150 volunteers, 2 full-time, and 1 part-time staff members. They offer one-on-one tutoring, ESL, digital literacy, and financial literacy among others. Some of the statistics she shared regarding residents of the NRV included:

- 24,000 adults read at or below 3rd grade level
- 38,000 adults cannot do basic math
- 7% of adults speak non-English languages

She expressed that the biggest barriers for their clients are transportation and childcare and spoke about some of their umbrella groups like Skill Up NRV that focuses on workplace skill education, Family Reads for adults and their child, and Be WELL NRV (Wellness for English Language Learners) which helps attendees describe symptoms to a doctor, read and understand medication instructions, fill out medical forms, ask questions to better understand diagnosis, prescriptions, and next steps, and how to make lifestyle changes that can improve health. She mentioned that literacy is a stronger predictor of health status than income, education, race, or ethnic group and that the 2021 Carilion CHA identified health literacy as the 4th highest need in our area. Ginny offered to help write questions for the upcoming CHA to make it more accessible. Please see the attached slides and documents/flyers for more information from Ginny.

Aaron Boush, Community Health and Outreach Director; Planning and Community Development, Carilion Clinic

Aaron shared that Carilion now has a Community Health and Development Department that is responsible for conducting community health assessments, managing investments for grants and sponsorships, maintaining partnerships, initiating health improvement programs and neighborhood health initiatives, and reporting on health benefits. Some of their priority areas include mental health, substance use stigma reduction, and chronic disease prevention and management. He shared some outcomes of their Peer Support Services:

- Patients are twice as likely to seek MAT services when connected to a peer in the ER
- When connected to a peer, a patient's total charges decrease by 13%, inpatient charges decrease by 55%, and outpatient care increases by 44% which resulted in 77% decrease in total charges
- Patients pre-intervention would spend on average 24 days in the hospital and only 12 days post-intervention

Aaron also talked about the kickoff of the Community Health Assessment that begins in October with data collection underway. This year that focus is on both community health needs as well as strengths. He invited PATH members to do the Stakeholder Focus Group during their fall meeting. They will be hosting a training on September 14th 1-2:30pm to assist those interested in facilitating community listening sessions on how best to structure their events to yield actionable feedback.

Aaron also spoke about Carilion's involvement in Unite US/Unite VA which is a referral and screening tool for social determinants. It's great for real-time data collection and connecting agencies. He plans to return to PATH and share data specifically from the NRV. See attached slides for more details about the information from his presentation.

Work group proposals/discussions:

Rhonda Seltz and Michelle Brauns have volunteered to lead a dental access workgroup. There was much discussion about dental care in the region and Michelle, Executive Director of the CHCNRV, mentioned that their waitlist is over 1,600 (mostly adults) and that most private dental offices in the area have stopped accepting Medicaid. Rhonda echoed concern about governmental leaders not being aware, and that we need to focus on getting money allocated to improve access. Other workgroup topic possibilities included: cancer, mental/behavioral health, substance use/harm reduction/MAT, and patient advocacy/insurance/language assistance. If you're interested in participating in any of these, please reach out to Rebecca Lord, Pam Ray, or Vicky Collins.

PATHWays Sharing

- Ashley Hash, Community Health Improvement Program Manager, shared two meetings that Carilion is hosting:
 - August 31st from 3-4pm for those interested in applying for Carilion grants
 - September 14th from 1-2:30pm for Community Listening Sessions Training
- Laura Beth Weaver, Director of the NRV Women's Resource Center, announced that the General Assembly appropriated money for sexual and domestic violence prevention work and that the Women's Resource Center was 1 out of 14 agencies throughout the Commonwealth to secure that funding. They are currently working with the five school districts to reinstate the Peace Line curriculum in their health curriculum. She shared that Violence Prevention Specialists are available to provide community level education/prevention and attend community events.
- Laureen Blakemore, Director of Community Engagement, announced that the YMCA of Virginia Tech is currently hiring for a Director of Youth Development. The 3rd annual YMCA International Welcoming week is September 8th-17th with the Welcoming Festival on September 17th from 1-4pm in the Market Square Park in downtown Blacksburg.
- Margo Walter shared that NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) has been presenting across the region on mental health issues and sharing their services and they will be starting new support groups at the 401 Peer Center in Radford.

The mission of PATH is to maximize access to healthcare across the New River Valley

Kristie Williams, CCU/ICU Director for Carilion, introduced some special guests in attendance: Mark Lawrence, VP of Governmental and External Affairs for Carilion and Dr. Mark Avery, a senior lecturer in Health Services Management at Griffith University in Australia. Dr. Avery shared his admiration of the interagency/intercommunity work he witnessed during the meeting and praised the group for its achievements and collaborations. He also briefly touched on the healthcare/dental care systems in Australia compared to the US systems.

Next PATH Meeting: November 2, 2023

Location: HCA LewisGale Pulaski, Education Building

Please send possible speakers and topics suggestions to: rebecca.lord@vdh.virginia.gov

THANK YOU

Carilion Giles Community Hospital for hosting us and providing lunch!